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JOSHUA'S STORY



by Michael Peter Langevin

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Joshua awoke one morning at the age of fourteen to find his father dead of an overdose in the living room of their run-down trailer in the back woods of rural California. He sat alone with his father's body for four hours until he could make himself call 911. The police came and searched the home. They found a great deal of illegal drugs and evidence that Joshua's missing mother was connected to the drugs. She was arrested and put in jail. Joshua did not see her again for the next five years except for two social service arranged visits to southern California where she was in prison.

Joshua was placed by social services in the home of an older cousin. This cousin was ill prepared to care for a grief filled fourteen-year-old. His way of reacting to his traumas, which was very normal, were intimidating and scary to her. She soon told social services she could not have what she felt was a crazy and potentially dangerous person in her home. She even advised he should be institutionalized. Because of her experiences with Joshua, none of his other relatives would take him. Thus began Joshua's rotating placements in over twelve foster homes during the next six years.

I was working as a therapist and social worker when I met Joshua. He was an angry, troubled youth with very few friends, almost flunking out of school. At my urging he began keeping a journal and writing poetry. The quality of his journaling was amazing and his poetry was exquisite. He also began to sing his poetry. It turned out he had a wonderful voice. I talked social services into buying him a guitar and a Macintosh laptop. Before and after school he began hanging out at a local coffee shop, playing his guitar, and singing. People loved it. The coffee shop owner arranged for Joshua to play regularly on Friday nights and eventually gave him a job after school behind the counter.

Joshua's anger dissipated. He made many new friends. The coffee shop owner and Joshua's co-workers became Joshua's first real support group. His high school grades picked up. His teachers, and even the principal, took a great interest in Joshua and became his second support group. The day Joshua graduated, many people who had come to care about him celebrated!

Joshua was accepted at a community college about fifty miles away from his support groups. I moved out of the area at that time. Joshua and I stayed in close touch via email. Joshua gave college his best, but living in a new city, totally on his own with no support groups proved too difficult. He flunked out. He got a job at Wal-Mart to pay his bills. He began playing his music in the coffee houses and clubs around Chico.

Before too long, a rather predictable downturn began. Joshua began drinking heavily and was increasingly depressed. His emails to me spoke of death and his fear that there was no existence after death, his inability to find real direction or meaning in life. All this concerned me greatly. Working at The Monroe Institute (TMI), I knew we could help, but Joshua was barely paying his bills. Neither did I have the money for Joshua to attend a TMI program. I discussed Joshua's situation with Nancy (Scooter) McMoneagle, TMI's President and Executive Director. Scooter said, "if you can get him here and he can pay \$100, TMI will award him a full scholarship to a Gateway Voyage program."

When I told Joshua he became elated. He said he would find a way to pay his bills and save \$100. I was in contact with an awesome philanthropist friend of mine who I had once traveled with to Africa. He donated the money for Joshua's round trip plane ticket.

Soon after hearing of his scholarship to the Gateway Voyage program, Joshua gave up drinking, began exercising, and read Robert Monroe's and others' self-improvement books and material. He was in a great place on every level by the time he got here.

At twenty-one he was the youngest participant in the program. Joshua later told me that he had thought: "I do not have anything in common with these other people." The physical surroundings and the way information was presented also had made him wonder if TMI was just too old fashioned to teach him anything. After the first night, however, "the Monroe Magic"

worked. His fellow participants became his good friends. He would drop by my office at TMI during a break each day and tell me of his experiences. His insights and the quality of his experiences just kept getting better.

One day he came in all excited. He felt strongly he had spoken with his dead father during one of the exercises. He told his father he loved him and forgave him for all the tough times. His father still felt badly about letting Joshua down and leading such a drug filled life. Joshua assured him that he had always known how much his father loved him. Joshua assured his father that he could talk to him any time. He also encouraged his father to get on with his spiritual evolution beyond physical matter reality. Joshua said, "When I found my dad he smelled like a thousand-year-old corpse encased in grief. When I left him he felt like a sweet young girl's soft tears of joy."

After the program Joshua made statements like: "This is the best experience of my entire life," "I came here doubting there was existence after death. Now I know there is not only that but tons of other levels to reality," "I have decided to reset my goals. I now want to write a book about my life and what I experienced and learned at TMI, and then I want to speak in public to inspire others to overcome their personal disasters," and, "When I go home I am going to listen to people closer and with more caring and I will tell them I love them. This will show people most clearly what I learned here." His quotable insights were nearly endless.

When he got home he emailed. "Michael, thank you and your wife, Sofia, and Scooter and everyone at Monroe for a unique and wonderful life transforming experience."

I share this story because it reminds us of how extremely effectively the programs work—even for close-minded, troubled twenty-one-year-olds. But I also share this story because the TMI Scholarship Fund has helped people around the world experience the life changing energies of TMI. If the fund was better endowed we could touch the lives of so many more people like Joshua and give them renewed hope and new direction.

This is my request to you: Please help TMI help others like Joshua find expanded meaning in their lives. Donate to the TMI scholarship fund now!

Thank you.